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THE LAST LEE HARVEY

Before he was shot, Lee Harvey Oswald denied ever possessing a rifle.

The last three days in the life of President Kennedy's accused assassin, Lee Oswald, have been shrouded in secrecy, as has the entire murder investigation.

The American public has rarely—if ever—taken a glimpse into the last 72 hours of the life of history's most notorious assassin. Here **MODERN PEOPLE** takes a look at the actions and statements of Lee Oswald only hours before he died. These are the comments you never saw on television or read in the newspapers.

After the assassination, Oswald was taken to Dallas Police Capt. J. W. Fritz' office in the presence of Homicide Officers R.M. Sims and E.L. Boyd. Also present were some Secret Service agents. Oswald's interrogation was postponed until FBI agents James P. Hosty and Jim Bookhout were brought in.

At no time was Oswald given an attorney, although at one point he did try to contact an attorney who had reportedly defended a group of Communists accused of trying to overthrow the GOV'T IN 1949.

"What is your name?" Oswald was asked.

"Lee Harvey Oswald."

"Do you work at the Texas School Book Depository?"

"I did." Oswald was tight-lipped and visibly angry.

"What floor?"

"Usually on the second floor, but my work carried me all over the building."

"Where were you at 12:30 when the President was shot?"

"I was eating lunch. Down on the first floor."

"Where were you when the police stopped you?"

Oswald paused a moment, then answered, "On the second floor drinking a Coke."

"Do you now or have you ever owned a rifle?"

"No, sir."

"Have you had occasion to borrow a rifle recently?"

"No sir. How could I afford to order a rifle on my salary of $1.25 an hour when I can't hardly feed myself on what I make?"

"Did you have a rifle November 22nd?"

"No, I saw a rifle in the building a few days earlier." The agents looked up from their notes in surprise. "Mr. Truly and some of the others were looking at it, November 20th, I believe. It was a 30.06 Mauser or something like that. I never paid too much attention."

"Are you a Communist?"

"I am a Marxist—but not a Leninist-Marxist."

"Well then, as a Marxist do you believe religion is an opiate of the people?"

"Definitely! All organized religions tend to become monopolistic. This is the cause for most of our class wars."

"Is Catholicism an enemy of the Communist philosophy?"

"WELL, THERE IS NO CATHOLICISM IN RUSSIA, →

WORDS OF OSWALD

the closest thing they have is the Orthodox Church. I don't think I should say anything more about religion. I know what you are trying to do. You're trying to get me to say something anti-Catholic or anti-religious. And then say that I'm a religious nut that killed a Catholic President."

"Did you kill the President?"

"No. I have not been charged with that. In fact, nobody has said that to me yet. The first thing I heard about it was when the newspaper reporters in the hall asked me that question."

Capt. Fritz pulled out an Enco service station map of Dallas and showed it to Oswald. Several places were marked with an X.

"Is this yours?" Fritz asked.

"Yes."

"Did you put these marks here?"

"My God, don't tell me there's a mark near where this thing happened!"

Fritz pointed to the mark near the Texas School Book Depository.

"Well, what about the other marks on the map?" Oswald retorted. "I put a number of marks on it. I was looking for work and marked the places where I went for jobs or where I heard there were jobs."

"Do you have any reason to hate the President?"

"My wife and I like the President's family. They are interesting people. I have my own views on the President's national policy. I have a right to express my views; but because of the charges I don't think I should comment any further."

Fritz handed Oswald a photo showing Oswald holding a rifle.

"Is this you?"

"This picture's a fake! You've doctored it up and put a gun in my hands!" Oswald exploded into a rage.

"We got these in Mrs. Paine's garage at 2515 West Fifth St. here in Irving."

"You photographed me several times yesterday. All you did was superimpose a rifle and a gun on that picture. That's a fake picture and you know it."

"It's real."

"I used to be a photographer. I know what the hell I'm talking about. It's fake! What did you do? Make a smaller one from the big one? Or the other way around?"

"Okay, Oswald, if they're fake, prove it."

"When the time comes, I will!"

"Where were you when this photo was taken?"

"I refuse to answer any more questions."

"Will you submit to a polygraph (lie detector) test?"

"Not without the advice of a lawyer. I've refused in the past and I'm refusing now.

"I killed no one. I refuse to answer any more questions. I know your tactics."

Capt. Fritz glanced toward the Secret Service agents. An FBI agent shook his head and Fritz told a guard to take Oswald back to his cell. It was 8 p.m., November 23rd. Oswald tried to call his wife, Marina, but was told she was gone.

That night the FBI received a phone call that a committee "had been formed to kill the man who killed the President." The FBI notified the Dallas police of the anonymous male caller.

At 9:30 a.m. the next day, Oswald was signed out of the jail and taken to Fritz' office where he again refused to answer any more questions about the photographs or the pistol. At 11:15 a.m. Oswald was taken out of Fritz' office.

"About 11 a.m.," recalls Dallas Postal Inspector H. D. Holmes, "or a few minutes thereafter, someone handed through the door several hangers on which there were some trousers, shirts, and a couple of sweaters. When asked if he wanted to change any of his clothes before being transferred back to the County Jail, he said, 'Just give me one of these sweaters.' He didn't like the one they handed him and insisted on putting on a black slipover sweater that had some jagged holes in it near the front of the right shoulder.

"During this change of clothing, Chief of Police (Jesse) Curry came into the room and discussed something in an inaudible undertone with Captain Fritz, apparently for the purpose of not letting Oswald hear what was being said. I have no idea what this conversation was. . . ."

Just moments after this mysterious conversation between Curry and Fritz, Lee Harvey Oswald was shot by Jack Ruby.

Oswald was dragged into a small room where a doctor rushed over and thrust a stethoscope into his sweater. Oswald gasped and said only, "Ouch!" before he sank into unconsciousness.

Lee Harvey Oswald made no other statements after his shooting. He was unconscious during the entire ambulance run to Parkland Memorial Hospital.

Ironically, word of Oswald's death reached President Johnson before it reached Oswald's family. Lyndon Johnson and Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy made a special request that Oswald's family be placed under a tight guard so that none of them would be harmed.

The President and the dead President's brother, according to Secret Service Inspector Thomas J. Kelley, "were concerned about the safety of Oswald's family and instructed that all precautions should be taken to see that no harm befell them."

It was a twisted chapter in a long and fearsome tragedy.